Members:

Cori Mantle-Bromley, Chair, Don Soltman, Roy Lacey, Bill Brulotte, Mary Anne Ranells, who resigned as of June 2014

Focus of the Work Group: to further refine the following recommendations of the Governor's Task Force:

#8 Statewide electronic collaboration system
#10 Educator and student technology devices with appropriate content
#17 Site-based collaboration among teachers and leaders
#18 Training and development of superintendents and school boards

The Work Group has met three times, via telephone conference calls. Meeting dates were April 29, May 13, and June 3.

We have gathered input from the following guests to our calls:

#8 Statewide electronic collaboration system: Carson Howell, Director of Research, SBOE; Alex Macdonald, Rick Kennedy, Jeff Church, SDOE; Greg Bailey and Lisa Smallwood, Moscow School District; Joyce Papp

#10 Educator and student technology devices with appropriate content: Royce Kimmons and Cassidy Hall, University of Idaho Technology Integration Specialists; Alex Macdonald, SDOE; Cindy Orr, Northwest Nazarene University Technology Integration Specialist; Joyce Popp, SDE; Greg Bailey and Lisa Smallwood, Moscow School District;

#17 Site-based collaboration among teachers and leaders: primarily used the expertise of the work group

#18 Training and development of superintendents and school boards: Senator Wendy Horman; Karen Echeverria, School Boards Association

The work group recognizes the time of those who have met with us, providing their expertise and perspectives on the four topics listed above. We have not yet formalized recommendations but provide the following as insight into emerging recommendations.

#8 "We recommend that a statewide electronic collaboration system be adopted for educators to share ideas and resources across the state" (Governor's Task Force).

Idaho was awarded a $6 million US DOE grant to develop a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) in 2009. The system, composed of K-12 data, post-secondary data, and the labor data base, continues to be refined. The K-12 system, Idaho System for Educational Excellence or ISEE, requires sophisticated and very detailed monthly uploads.

The Albertson Foundation granted $21 million to Idaho's SDE to link the ISEE data to an Instructional Improvement System or IIS. The state selected the IIS known as SchoolNet, in part for its lesson planning and assessment functions.

School district personnel have been unsatisfied with SchoolNet, listing numerous frustrations, including accuracy of data. As a result, some superintendents designed Milepost to provide a much simpler platform with the capacity for districts to pull ISEE data for their use. There are now several IIS systems in use in Idaho. Small districts especially have found SchoolNet cumbersome and they have had great difficulty with its use. Meridian School District and Post Falls School District are two that have invested considerable time and money to get to the point where SchoolNet is supporting their needs.

Just recently, the Albertson Foundation received a commissioned evaluation of the Idaho's IIS and concluded that the funds being spent were not yielding results they had hoped for. They have pulled their final payment of just over $1 million. Pearson (owner of SchoolNet) has provided what they can to Idaho and will no longer service or upgrade the system.

Facts:
1. There are a variety of Instructional Improvement Systems or IIS being used in Idaho.
2. The state cannot service or provide professional development for all of the systems.
3. The state would like to see everyone using one system.
4. Higher education uses Blackboard as its collaboration tool
5. The current biggest challenge in ISEE, according to Mr. Howell, is verifying data as it comes in so that accurate data goes back to its stakeholders.
6. Superintendents want to keep IIS as they see the value when teachers can use data for lesson planning and collaboration.
7. SchoolNet is voluntary. 42 districts received grant licenses. A total of 120 districts have at least logged in to the system. Everyone has access.
8. Successful input of data requires personnel with broad understanding and significant skill. Districts vary in their ability to find someone with the appropriate skill.
9. The more people who touch the data, the less accurate it is or the more time is needed to verify accuracy.
10. The SDE sees advantages of SchoolNet over other providers
11. SchoolNet is now a static system, unsupported by the provider.

Questions:
1. What data is really necessary for ISEE? Can the burden of data collection be pared down?
2. Use of National Student Clearing House data could help districts, but the ISEE data isn't yet accurate. How long will it take to verify and clean up this data?

3. Should the state financially support one system? What kind of leadership would it take to make one system viable and successful? (Washington has adopted Skyward)
4. What can be learned from the $20 million SchoolNet venture that has resulted in so little payoff?

Emerging Recommendations:
1. Many we talked to felt that Idaho should have one system for their IIS. If this is recommended, districts will struggle as they have spent much time and money getting to where they currently are with the systems they're using.
2. The Data Management Council, overseeing the entire ILDS, may need to review its entire process: how data comes in, who collects it and why it is needed.

#10   Educator and student technology devices with appropriate content. "We recommend that every educator and student have adequate access to technology devices with appropriate content to support equal access and opportunity. Educator professional development is critical to the effective implementation of technology" Governor's Task Force.

Issues of infrastructure must be addressed before 1:1 devices are discussed. While every district can connect to the internet through the Idaho Education Network or IEN, the connections are often inadequate, leading to dropped connections and very slow downloads. Further, it is only the state's high schools that are guaranteed access through the IEN. Many elementary schools lack connectivity.

There are classrooms without even the basis teaching tools such as projectors.

Once infrastructure is accomplished, there are two needs for every district, and they usually entail different skill sets in different people. Districts need technology experts who understand the various tools used by the school, understand the infrastructure system, and can provide support and can trouble shoot. Teachers need to know that devices will work in their classrooms. Second, teachers need pedagogical leaders who can mentor, demonstrate, and support the integration of technology into instruction. Teaching with technology demands different skill sets than many teacher have. Increasing technology literacy will take time.

It is critical that one focus at the elementary level be keyboarding skills. The new SmarterBalance assessment requires keyboard responses from third graders.

Emerging recommendation
1. Install wireless infrastructure in every school. Devices need content and connection is critical to content. This may need to be a coordinated effort with entities such as the Idaho Rural Partnership. There are some districts without connectivity. Others have such slow connections that teachers can't stream content.

2. Keep in mind that younger students more often consume content and as students get older, they need to be able to create content.
3. Schools need two types of technology leaders: those with the technical skills to support devices and infrastructure and those with the pedagogy to lead integration efforts.
4. The state needs to define what is basic to every Idaho classroom. What defines a "21st century classroom?"
5. Schools should have leeway to determine what devices will work for their students with their infrastructure.
6. Elementary students need regular access to keyboards in order to develop skills for testing.

#17   Site-based collaboration among teachers and leaders. "We recommend providing training models to districts for their use in training the members of the professional learning communities, and encourage models that focus on team outcomes and collective responsibility" Governor's Task Force.

There was little questioning of the need for and importance of site-based collaboration. Lakeland SD uses one hour per week for collaboration. It is not enough (MA Rannells). They would like to see more time for in-depth training, collaboration, research, and guest speakers. There are districts that cannot afford even this minimal collaboration time as it expands the teachers' contract days.

Agreements:
1. Site-based collaboration and job-embedded professional development are vital to improvement.
2. The professional development dollars provided by the state have been invaluable, but insufficient.
3. Technology can be a major boost to teacher collaboration: Outlook, EdModo, Google Plus, BBL, Brain Honey, Milepost, SchoolNet all being used as collaboration tools.
4. Milepost advantages: user-friendly, low on bells and whistles, easy to access student data, good for RTI or response to intervention.
5. SchoolNet—folks are still learning. Key will be usefulness tied to curriculum.

Emerging Recommendations:
1. Add a minimum of 16 hours of professional development time for teachers, per calendar contract.
2. Ideal job-embedded professional development would be 1.5 – 2 hours per week.
3. Provide stipends for teachers for some in-house after hours professional development.

#18   Training and development of superintendents and school boards. "We recommend continued training and professional development of school administrators, superintendents and school boards" (Governor's Task Force).

We discussed HB521, which provides the opportunity to offer training to school boards and to provide funding for that training as an incentive. Executive Director of ISBA has worked to develop criteria for trainers with regard to strategic planning.

Emerging Recommendations:
1. Track the impact of HB521 to determine next steps.
2. Determine if programs preparing school leaders require strategic planning coursework